

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021, 5:30 p.m, via Zoom

Present: Selectboard members Richard Baker, Christopher Martin, and Laurie Colgan; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Visitors Patrick Healy (School Board chair); Library Trustees Anne Reed, Christina Ducharme, Sonia Carrasco, Cathy Chodorkoff, and Kara Casey; Library Director Susan Green; Children's Librarian Deborah Connelly

At 5:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Martin. The Board met in executive session to conduct interviews for the position of Road Crew member. The Board returned to open session at 6:00.

Changes or additions to the agenda: Budget review

Public Comment: none

Minutes: tabled

Town Meeting: The Plainfield Selectboard is not ready to make a decision about whether or not to postpone town meeting. Bobbi explained that delaying the decision will give voters less time to get petitions in if the meeting is not going to be postponed. The legislature hasn't given the towns the authority to postpone yet, but it is likely that they will. The Selectboard indicated to Patrick that they are inclined to postpone the meeting, and mail a ballot to every voter. The Selectboard will attend the School Board meeting next week.

The Board reviewed sample ballots from several other towns. After discussion, the Board decided to list each social service agency separately – this is the practice in other towns. They recognized that the Budget Committee has reviewed and approved the requests, but they do not want to risk the entire article being voted down.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant: Rich suggested that the Town should select the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission because their hourly rate is lower and they have more experience. Rich moved to award the project to them, with the condition that the total cost can not exceed \$9,999, and authorize Bobbi to sign the contract. Chris seconded – all in favor. The Town will try to recruit members of the public to help with the plan.

Budget: The Board reviewed the budget surplus. They agreed to put some of the money aside in the bridge fund (\$15,000), the paving fund (\$15,000), the highway equipment fund (\$40,000), and the recreation fund (\$12,000). They discussed that the recreation fund could be used to pave the basketball court. The remaining surplus will be used to lower taxes.

Personnel: At 7:15, Laurie moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel issue. The Board returned to open session at 7:25.

Library: The Trustees asked to be on the agenda to discuss a new provision in the lease,

prohibiting signs that are not related to tenant business. Rich explained that the Selectboard has a policy to try to keep town property politically neutral, and they want to make the leases reflect that policy. He explained that allowing signs would require that they allow any sign that a tenant wanted to put up, and some signs that might not be offensive to some people, could be offensive to other people. He indicated that nothing in the lease would prohibit tenants from putting up signs inside their space.

Kara explained that the wording in the lease seemed to be directed at the Library's Black Lives Matter sign. The Library has worked for racial justice, and they see the sign as part of their educational agenda.

Rich asked if they feel that other organizations should be allowed to put up signs that they don't agree with. The Trustees feel that a sign should be allowed if it is related to the tenant's work. They feel that the Black Lives Matter sign is an extension of their business. They are in the business of education.

Susan explained that the Library's racial justice display has been very well-received, and people want to be educated. Sonia reiterated that if a sign is relevant to a tenant's business, it should be allowed, and this sign is relevant to the Library's business.

The Trustees asked whether there have been any complaints. Bobbi explained that there were a couple of complaints before the general election, questioning whether the sign should be allowed during early voting. Bobbi received confirmation from the Secretary of State's office that a Black Lives Matter sign is not prohibited by election law because it does not refer to a candidate or a question on the ballot.

Christina explained that the Library needs to be a place of inclusivity, and we need to show the community that everyone is welcome.

Susan explained that all libraries are being encouraged to promote racial justice education.

The Board suggested that the Library could add to their Black Lives Matter sign, encouraging people to come in and view the Library's collection on racial justice issues. After reviewing the wording in the lease, everyone agreed that the sign is not in conflict with the lease.

Expenses, Permits & Payroll: Selectboard members read and signed reports for General Expenses and Payroll and authorized Rich to sign them.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the January 5, 2021 Selectboard Meeting.
A True Record. Attest, _____, Town Clerk
